UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities (GNLC)

Call for applications to host the sixth International Conference on Learning Cities in June 2024

Application period: 15 April 2023 to 15 June 2023

1. Background

The sixth International Conference on Learning Cities (ICLC) is due to take place in June 2024. Under the working title ‘Learning cities at the forefront of climate action’, it will provide a platform to share best practice in building sustainable learning cities, take stock of progress across the activities of the UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities (GNLC) and its thematic clusters, and promote an integrated learning city approach for achieving lifelong learning and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at local level.

UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) invites member cities of the network to submit their applications to host the sixth ICLC in June 2024 to the GNLC Coordination Team, at learningcities@unesco.org, no later than 15 June 2023. Please note the applications must be endorsed by the mayor of the applicant city.

2. What are the requirements for being a host city?

To be eligible for consideration to host the conference, GNLC member cities must demonstrate that they are able to meet the following requirements:

a. Overall commitment to the UNESCO GNLC and conference budget

- Provide a summary of the city’s interest in hosting the sixth International Conference on Learning Cities.
- Ensure alignment of the conference with the goals and values of the UNESCO GNLC.
- Demonstrate support from local and national authorities to host the conference.
- Demonstrate strong cooperation with key partners to organize the conference.
• Provide a highly professional team to organize the conference.
• Provide details on the proposed budget for hosting the conference (in US dollars).

b. Transportation

• Cover the travel costs (return flight tickets with the shortest route according to the most economic option) of at least 70 selected participants, to be determined by UIL.
• Cover the travel costs (return flight tickets with the shortest route according to the most economic option) of the UIL Secretariat attending the conference (up to seven members of staff).
• Provide transportation services at arrival and departure at the airport, as well as shuttle buses between hotels and conference venue for all participants.
• Arrange for the correct protocol regarding VIPs: separate, individualized pick-up and VIP lounge.
• Provide transportation services for official events related to the conference (e.g. site visits) for all participants.
• Ensure that the conference is easily accessible for attendees, including persons with disabilities.
• Ensure that the conference is environmentally sustainable.

c. Accommodation and other services

• Provide detailed information on proposed hotel accommodation, including negotiated special prices on 3-5 star options within 5km of the conference venue and ensuring accommodation for approximately 650 participants.
• Determine whether the proposed venue for the conference will be in the same location as hotel accommodation and, if not, provide information on connections between the different locations.
• Cover the accommodation of at least 150 selected participants, to be determined by UIL.
• Cover the accommodation of the UIL Secretariat attending the conference (up to seven members of staff).
• Provide the UIL Secretariat with cards for mobile phones for official purposes.
• Host one cocktail reception for conference participants.
• Arrange and cover the meals (i.e. breakfast, lunch and dinner) and beverages for the duration of the conference for all participants (approximately 650).
• Provide details on how catering arrangements will be made for the conference and how dietary requirements will be accommodated.
• Organise a social-cultural programme related to the conference topic for all participants, in consultation with UIL.
• Facilitate the visa application and approval process for participants, interpreters and UNESCO staff members, according to national visa requirements.
• Facilitate the delivery of working documents, publications and other conference materials through customs.

d. Venues and other facilities

• Reserve suitable venues for the conference sessions, to be equipped with all the necessary technical facilities, including, but not limited to:
  o one large conference room (that can hold up to 650 participants);
  o at least five smaller rooms suitable for up to 120 participants each, to be used during the thematic sessions;
  o several smaller meeting and conference rooms (including technical equipment) necessary for the organization and management of the conference, for the press, for mayors, individual meetings, etc.;
  o one room for at least 10 participants of the conference drafting group;
  o one room for the conference secretariat equipped with desks and chairs, telephone, computers, printers, photocopy machines, international telephone line, Wi-Fi and scanner/fax machine;
  o one office room for the meetings of high-level participants equipped with VIP office furniture, computer, printer and international telephone line, Wi-Fi, scanner/fax machine and coffee/tea facilities;
  o one press room equipped with large desks and chairs, computer, printer, and photocopy machine;
  o interpretation booths for three languages for all plenary, thematic and group sessions in the large conference room and in the smaller rooms, as per UNESCO protocol;
  o infrastructure and resources to ensure accessibility for all attendees, including persons with disabilities.
• Provide the name of the proposed venue for the conference for at least 650 participants and a
detailed floor plan, highlighting the venue’s capacity, its location and at least two other major
events that have been organized there.
• Organize bilingual staff (English and/or French) and ushers/meeting clerks (male and female) for
reception desk, registration desk, secretariat and exhibition area.
• Provide, at own expense, the security necessary for the safe operation of all pre-session meetings,
the meetings and sessions of the main conferences, and any other meetings related to the event.

e. Learning City Award Ceremony

• Organize and cover the Learning City Award 2024 ceremony (approximately 80 participants) on
the day prior to the conference, including venue arrangement, a cocktail reception, catering,
certificate and award making and printing, and logistical support to audio-visual equipment.

f. Interpretation

• Provide interpretation services in English, French and Spanish, including interpretation booths for
the three languages for all plenary, thematic and group sessions, as per UNESCO protocol and
according to international standards; if desired, interpretation into the national language should
also be provided.
Cover the costs of interpretation in three working languages, as per UNESCO protocol, arranged
three months before the conference starts.

g. Technical equipment

• Cover costs for all technical and audio-visual equipment in relation to the conference.
• Provide technicians to support simultaneous interpretation, operate sound system and audio
recording, and support the use of all office machines (e.g. computers, photocopy machines) in all
meetings rooms.
• Provide at least two large projection screens and equipment for PowerPoint presentations
(including computer and video projector) in the large conference room.
• Provide at least one projection screen and equipment for PowerPoint presentations (including computer and video projector) in the smaller rooms of thematic and group meetings.
• Ensure Wi-Fi is available free-of-charge in all meeting areas.

h. Media and communication

• Provide media services and a communications team to offer high-quality support for the conference.
• Provide and manage a system for participant registration while granting full access rights to UIL. The conference website will be hosted and maintained by UIL.
• Provide a staff member on secondment to the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning in Hamburg, Germany, for five months in the lead-up to the conference.

i. Publications

• Support and contribute to the development of background research for the sixth ICLC, including funding for research papers, access to databases and technical support for data analysis and visualization.
• Collaborate with universities, research institutions and other stakeholders to encourage and support research on learning cities.

Please note that these requirements are not exhaustive and aim to provide an initial overview of the responsibilities that come with hosting the sixth ICLC. The final arrangements will be included in a host agreement to be signed by the concerned parties. Please note that the conference programme will be developed by the UNESCO GNLC in consultation with the authorities of the host city. The key speakers and panellists of the conference will also be selected by the UNESCO GNLC in consultation with the authorities of the host city.

Applications will be evaluated based on the following criteria:
• overall commitment to the learning cities initiative and conference budget;
• venues and logistical requirements;
• accommodation and catering;
• accessibility and local transport;
interpretation, technical equipment and media and communication requirements;

commitment and financial resources to support the development of background research.

3. When can the cities submit their applications?

Applications, endorsed by the mayor, must be received by the GNLC Coordination Team (copying the National Commission for UNESCO) no later than 15 June 2023. The selected host city will be announced in July 2023. Applications will be evaluated by the UNESCO GNLC Secretariat. In evaluating applications, the Secretariat strives to rotate the hosting of the conference to different UNESCO world regions.

4. General information on previous UNESCO GNLC conferences

- **2013**: ‘Lifelong learning for all: Inclusion, prosperity and sustainability in cities’, Beijing, People’s Republic of China. The conference opened the global discourse on learning cities and defined the UNESCO concept of a learning city.

- **2015**: ‘Sustainable learning cities’, Mexico City, Mexico. The conference saw the launch of the Guidelines for Building Learning Cities and defined the role of learning cities in achieving sustainable development.

- **2017**: ‘Global goals, local actions: Towards lifelong learning for all in 2030’, Cork, Ireland. The event focused on implementing lifelong learning to support the achievement of the SDGs by 2030.

- **2019**: ‘Inclusion – A principle for lifelong learning and sustainable cities’, Medellín, Colombia. Around 650 participants, including 50 mayors, as well as government representatives and experts from all UNESCO world regions, came together to share initiatives that promote inclusion in learning cities.

- **2021**: ‘From emergency to resilience: Building healthy and resilient cities through learning’, Yeonsu, Republic of Korea. The first hybrid ICLC attracted more than 2,000 participants and provided GNLC members with opportunities to share their responses to the COVID-19 pandemic and their initiatives for building healthy and resilient cities.
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